

Dear Friends,
Dear Friends,

The second session of the 108th Congress brought important votes and some tough decisions for Minnesota's First District. I want to share with you the following list of votes from this year that I think were important.

I hope you will take the time to review this information and, as always, contact me with feedback.

I look forward to hearing from you as we get ready for a productive 2005!

Sincerely,

Gil



Left page: Congressman Gutknecht meets with local officials in Austin to discuss flooding. Farm policy was the topic with Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman at Farm Fest in Redwood Falls.

Right page: Congressman Gutknecht talks about his duties as a Representative with elementary students in Glenville. He discusses health care issues with Sleepy Eye residents after presenting a USDA check for the hospital.

HOW I VOTED AND WHY...

supported TAX RELIEF

The House passed several important tax relief measures, including making marriage penalty relief permanent, extending the child tax credit and creating a new 10-percent tax bracket that lowers taxes on low-income Americans. I believe people can better spend their money than Washington bureaucrats.
(HR 4182, passed the House 323-95, April 29, 2004; HR 4359, passed the House 271-139, May 20, 2004; HR 4275, passed the House 344-76, May 13, 2004)

Co-sponsored PENSION PROTECTION

H.AMDT.765 – This amendment would have prohibited the federal government from assisting in overturning the ruling for the plaintiffs in the *IBM v. Cooper* case. The U.S. District Court ruled that IBM unfairly altered the retirement benefits of their employees. Companies should offer their vested employees a choice between staying in their old plan or switching to a new plan when they change pension plan structures.
(HAmDt 765, passed the House, 237-162, Sep. 21, 2004)

Opposed TRANSPORTATION BILL

The Transportation Equity Act would provide \$284 billion in new taxpayer dollars for transportation projects. There were more than 3,000 earmark projects. These “special projects” across the country cut the total dollars available. Minnesota would have seen a dramatic drop in the percentage of gas taxes returned to our state.
(HR 3550 passed the House, 357-65, April 2, 2004)

supported APPROPRIATIONS

The Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act is the omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2005. The measure is the tightest federal budget in the past four years. It complies with the spending targets agreed to by the House and the Administration.
(HR 4818 passed the House, 344-51, November 20, 2004)

supported PLEDGE PROTECTION

The Pledge Protection Act of 2004 would not allow federal courts or any appellate jurisdiction to the Supreme Court from hearing or deciding any case involving the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance. On June 26, 2002, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit ruled the words “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. Congress must return to its role as a check on runaway courts.
(HR 2028 passed the House, 247-173, September 23, 2004)

supported TORT REFORM

The Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-Cost, Timely Healthcare Act (HEALTH) would eliminate frivolous lawsuits, which lead to higher insurance premiums and costs to small businesses and health care providers. Tort reform, together with making pharmaceuticals more affordable, will go a long way toward reducing health care costs.
(HR 4280 passed the House, 229-197, May 12, 2004)

supported ENERGY BILL

The Energy Policy Act would update our national energy policy. This bill reinforces the importance of renewable energy to Minnesota and our need for a comprehensive energy strategy. It included:

- a renewable fuel standard for annual use over the next ten years;
- a tax credit through 2006 for electricity produced from wind energy, biomass, landfill gas and trash combustion facilities;
- a biodiesel tax credit; and
- a small ethanol producers tax credit.

(HR 4503, passed the House 244-178, June 15, 2004)

supported JOB CREATION

The American Jobs Creation Act would end World Trade Organization sanctions on U.S. products, reduce the corporate tax rate by 3 percent. It encourages companies to invest in American jobs with numerous tax benefits. There were several energy provisions, such as a tax credit for ethanol and biodiesel production as well as an expansion of the Renewable Electricity Production Tax Credit.
(HR 4520 passed the House, 251-178, June 17, 2004)

supported MARRIAGE PROTECTION

The Marriage Protection Amendment would define marriage as between one man and one woman.
(HJRes 106 failed in the House, 227-186, September 30, 2004. Constitutional amendments need two-thirds of the vote, or 290 votes, to pass.)

supported SPENDING CONTROL

The Spending Control Act would have restored fiscal responsibility in Congress by reinstating PAYGO (pay-as-you-go) rules and spending caps to control federal spending. As a senior member of the Budget Committee, I secured a commitment to bring this debate to the House floor.
(HR 4663 failed in the House, 146-268, June 25, 2004)

supported LACI PETERSON LAW

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act provides that if an unborn child is injured or killed during a federal crime of violence, prosecutors can bring two charges: one on behalf of the mother and one on behalf of the unborn victim.
(HR 1997 passed the House, 254-163, February 26, 2004; signed into law by President Bush, April 4, 2004)

supported BROADCAST DECENCY

The Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act would strengthen already existing FCC regulations against indecency on broadcast television by authorizing fines up to \$500,000 for each violation. This measure shows a commitment to upholding the standards of common decency for our families and children.
(HR 3737 passed the House, 391-22, March 11, 2004)

Opposed AUSTRALIA TRADE DEAL

The Australia Free Trade Agreement provides access to both the U.S. and Australia markets regarding agriculture and manufacturing. Unfortunately, it also prevents American consumers from accessing affordable prescription drugs from Australia. This sets a dangerous precedent.
(HR 4759 passed the House, 314-109, July 14, 2004)

supported 9/11 BILL

The 9/11 Commission Implementation Act is an important step in strengthening our intelligence capabilities, borders and immigration policy and our ability to find and prosecute terrorists. Ultimately, the version I supported served its purpose – protecting American citizens. Unfortunately, the conference report discussed in November took a major step backward by deleting critical border protection provisions. To protect our homeland, we must make this a priority.
(HR 10 passed the House, 282-134, October 8, 2004)

More information can be found at
www.house.gov and **www.gil.house.gov**.

Left photo: Congressman Gutknecht hears about health care costs at Madonna Towers in Rochester.

Right photo: Congressman Gutknecht learns about soy processing at Cenex Harvest States in Fairmont.



STAY CONNECTED...

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Radio Shows

Congressman Gutknecht's **radio show**, "Conversations with the Congressman" is a weekly program featuring an update on the week's activities, interesting guests and your chance to call in with questions about the issues important to you. Conversations will resume January 14, 2005. Contact the Rochester office or visit www.gil.house.gov to find the list of stations and show times for your listening area. Shows are also posted on the web site.

The E-Line

Congressman Gutknecht's **E-Line** is a weekly report via your e-mail on all the activities in Washington and Minnesota. It includes details on important votes, interesting news articles and the latest photos from Gil's meetings and visits with constituents. Sign up at www.gil.house.gov to receive your copy of the E-Line every Friday afternoon.



Congressman Gutknecht speaks about rural development at the groundbreaking for Windom Telecommunications as part of his 2004 'Jobs Tour'.

2004: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

AGRICULTURE

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

EDUCATION

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Congressman Gil Gutknecht

ECONOMIC GROWTH

SECURITY

First District, Minnesota

CONSERVATION

ENERGY

December 2004

TELECOMMUNICATION

BUDGET

TAXES

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

VETERANS

TRANSPORTATION

VALUES



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